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## Minutes of the 39<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the Parish Council held at 7.30pm on 7<sup>th</sup> May 2024

**Present:** Mr A Burton (Chairman), Mrs M Dormer, Mr R Gill, Mrs A King, Mr S Oversby-Powell, Mr M Sheldon and Mr A Symonds

**In Attendance:** Mrs S Heynes (Parish Clerk)

**Public Question Time:** 2 members of the public attended the meeting to present their proposal regarding agenda item FC022 the future use of Cuckfield Village Hall. They explained their reasons for this were due to the closure of Next Step nursery and the continuing funding issues faced by Preschool. There was also an increasing number of SEN children and it would be helpful to identify these earlier to enable better support to be provided for them as they transfer to school.

The proposal was to request the Parish Council consider granting a lease of Cuckfield Village Hall to the Holy Trinity Primary School who would either refurbish it or replace it to use as a nursery. Council expressed their thanks for the presentation and would discuss this further and arrange a working group meeting to explore options in more detail.

### **FC001 To elect a Chairman and Vice Chairman**

Cllr Burton presided for this item. Nominations for the office of Chairman of the Council were called.

Cllr King proposed and Cllr Sheldon seconded that Cllr Andrew Burton be nominated as Chairman. There being no further nominations, Cllr Burton was elected as Chairman to the Parish Council for the Council year 2024-25.

Nominations for the office of Vice Chairman were called. Cllr Symonds proposed and Cllr Dormer seconded that Cllr Martin Sheldon be nominated as Vice Chairman. There were no further nominations and Cllr Sheldon was duly elected as Vice Chairman to the Parish Council for the Council year 2024-25.

### **FC002 To receive Declarations of Acceptance of Office of Chairman and Vice Chairman or, if permitted by Council, before or at a later date fixed by the Council**

Declarations of Acceptance of Office were signed in the presence of the Proper Officer at the meeting.

Cllr Burton then took the chair for the meeting and welcomed members to the thirty-ninth annual meeting of Cuckfield Parish Council.

### **FC003 To receive apologies for absence**

Apologies were offered by Cllrs Ceccherini, Podmore and White.

- FC004 To receive notification of updated Councillors Register of Interests**  
Councillors advised there were no changes to their register of interests.
- FC005 To note the requirements of and resolve to adopt the Code of Conduct**  
Requirements of the Code of Conduct were duly noted and adopted.
- FC006 To receive declarations of interest from Members in respect of any matter on the agenda. The disclosure must include the nature of the interest. If you become aware, during the meeting, of an interest that has not been disclosed under this item you must immediately disclose it**  
None.
- FC007 To approve the minutes of the Full Council meeting held on 19<sup>th</sup> March 2024**  
The minutes of the meeting held on 19<sup>th</sup> March 2024 were taken as read and confirmed as a true record.
- FC008 To receive a verbal report from the Chairman**  
Cllr Burton opened by welcoming all Councillors to Cuckfield Parish Council for the upcoming year. Cllr Burton also thanked the staff for organising this year's APM, it had been a great event and he was looking forward to next year.
- FC009 To note the Full Council Action list**  
The action items were noted.
- FC010 To approve Bank Reconciliation Statements for March and April 2024 for Unity Trust and CCLA**  
The bank reconciliation statements were reviewed, approved and signed.
- FC011 To review the 2023-24 finances to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024**  
Council reviewed the budget and noted the final income for 2023-24 was approx. £50k higher than the forecast income, which broadly reflected the variance underspend for the year.
- FC012 To review and (re)adopt Standing Orders and Financial Regulations**  
Council resolved to re-adopt the Standing Orders and Financial Regulations, although it was noted that a new set of Financial Regulations had been issued by NALC which the Clerk would review and update and bring to a future meeting for adoption.
- FC013 To consider a review of the standing committee for the year 2023-24, appoint and review their terms of reference and delegation of functions, receive nominations for membership of committees and consider the appointment of the Chair and Vice-Chair of the committee:**
- a) Assets, Community & Environment**  
Cllr Symonds was nominated by Cllr Dormer and seconded by Cllr Gill as Chairman. Cllr Gill was nominated by Cllr Symonds and seconded by Cllr Dormer as Vice Chairman.  
Cllrs Ceccherini, Dormer, Podmore and White were additional members
- b) Community Buildings**  
Cllr King was nominated by Cllr Symonds and seconded by Cllr Oversby-Powell as Chairman.

Cllr Symonds was nominated by Cllr Oversby-Powell and seconded by Cllr King as Vice Chairman.

Cllrs Oversby-Powell and White were additional members.

**c) Planning**

Cllr Oversby-Powell was nominated by Cllr Dormer and seconded by Cllr Burton as Chairman.

Cllr Dormer was nominated by Cllr Oversby-Powell and seconded by Cllr Sheldon as Vice Chairman.

Cllrs Gill, King, Podmore and White were additional members.

**d) Roads & Traffic**

Cllr White was nominated by Cllr King seconded by Cllr Sheldon as Chairman.

Cllr Ceccherini was nominated by Cllr Burton and seconded by Cllr Sheldon as Vice Chairman.

Cllrs King and Oversby-Powell were additional members.

**e) Human Resources**

Cllr Burton was nominated by Cllr Sheldon and seconded by Cllr King as Chairman.

Cllr Sheldon was nominated by Cllr Burton and seconded by Cllr King as Vice Chairman.

Cllrs King and Oversby-Powell were additional members.

**f) Finance & General Purposes**

Cllr Sheldon was nominated by Cllr King and seconded by Cllr Oversby-Powell as Chairman.

Cllr Symonds was nominated by Cllr King and seconded by Cllr Burton as Vice Chairman.

Cllrs King, Oversby-Powell and White were additional members.

The Chairman and Vice-Chairman were ex-officio members of all committees.

The Clerk would prepare and circulate a Committees list and the terms of reference to all Members.

**FC014 To consider the Working Groups required for 2023-24 and confirm membership:**

- **Cuckfield Village Hall Redevelopment**  
Cllrs King, Podmore, Sheldon, Symonds and White
- **Christmas Street Festival**  
Cllrs Gill and Podmore, with a proposal to contact Cucksoc and Holy Trinity Church to see if they would like to be involved with the organisation of this event. The Clerk was instructed to add this to the next ACE agenda for discussion.
- **Angela Fox Nature Garden**  
Cllrs Burton, Dormer, Gill, King, Podmore and Symonds
- **Neighbourhood Plan**  
Cllrs Burton, Dormer, Oversby-Powell, Podmore, Sheldon, Symonds and White

**FC015 To appoint representatives to and agree arrangements for reporting back from:**

- **West Sussex Association of Local Councils (2 representatives)**  
Cllrs Burton & Sheldon
- **Cuckfield Museum Trust (2 representatives)**  
Cllrs King and Symonds
- **Blunts Wood Steering Committee (1 representative)**

Cllr Podmore

- **Emergency Planning Liaison Group (1 representative)**  
Cllr Symonds
- **Neighbourhood Watch (1 representative)**  
Cllr White
- **Mid Sussex Association of Local Councils (1 representative)**  
Cllr Sheldon
- **Town & Parish Strategic Liaison Group (2 representatives)**  
Cllr Dormer and Parish Clerk
- **Speedwatch (1 representative)**  
Cllr White
- **PCC (1 representative)**  
Cllr Sheldon

**FC016 To review and agree authorised signatories on the Council's bank accounts (currently Cllrs Burton, King, Podmore, Sheldon and White)**  
Council resolved to retain existing signatories.

**FC017 To reconfirm eligibility and approve the continued use of the General Power of Competence (GPC). The Criteria for the GPC as defined in S8 of the Localism Act 2011 (having an appropriately qualified Clerk and at least two thirds of the Council being elected) is met by the Council**  
The Clerk confirmed that the Council still met the criteria for the GPC as defined in S8 of the Localism Act 2011 (having an appropriately qualified Clerk and at least two thirds of the Council being elected), and Council noted the continued adoption of the General Power of Competence.

**FC018 To approve the continuation of the following arrangements:**

- a. **current delegation to committees, staff and other local authorities in line with legislation, Standing Orders, Financial Regulations and Terms of Reference**
- b. **ongoing partnership (including legal arrangements) with other local authorities, not for profit bodies and businesses**
- c. **ongoing direct debits and annual continual contracts and agreements**

Council noted existing arrangements had not changed and resolved they should continue.

**FC019 To note the appointment of the Internal Auditor for 2023-26**  
Council ratified the instruction of Mulberry & Co for the next 3 years.

**FC020 To review and confirm arrangements for the following items (copies available in the Parish Office):**

- a) **Inventory of land and assets including buildings and office equipment**
- b) **Insurance arrangements in respect of all insured risks**

Council reviewed and resolved to accept all arrangements in place for the above items. The Clerk advised that new purchases had been added to the fixed assets list, and old items decommissioned.

**FC021 To note and approve the effectiveness of the Audit Plan and the Council's Internal Audit and Internal Control Procedures**

Council noted and approved the effectiveness of the Audit Plan and the Council's Internal Audit and Internal Control Procedures.

- FC022 To consider the proposal received from Holy Trinity Primary School regarding the future use of Cuckfield Village Hall**  
Council discussed the proposals received, and would need to check the status of the PWLB mortgage on the existing building and the consequences of removing the existing building and replacing with a new build. More discussion would be necessary which would take place within the working party.
- FC023 To receive an update from the Village Hall Working Party and consider the next steps regarding the future of Cuckfield Village Hall**  
In light of the presentation received from Holy Trinity Primary School further discussion and information was necessary before a decision regarding the future of the Village Hall could be made. The Clerk was instructed to arrange a Working Party meeting to take place to enable further feedback at the next Full Council meeting in June 2024.
- FC024 To receive an update regarding the Neighbourhood Plan refresh and consider next steps**  
Cllr Burton explained that the options available were to leave the Neighbourhood Plan as it was, as the updated District Plan supported it, with an alternative to review the Neighbourhood Plan to reflect the updates included in the District Plan once it had been adopted, hopefully later in 2024. A further recommendation was to request a meeting with MSDC to explain our approach to updating the Neighbourhood Plan. The Clerk was instructed to request a meeting between MSDC and Cllrs Burton and Dormer, and to investigate the provision of grants that were available to cover the costs of Neighbourhood Plan refreshes.
- FC025 To receive an update regarding the development of the Angela Fox Nature Garden in 2024**  
Council resolved to proceed with the planting scheme on a phased basis, starting with the raised beds, the bed between the upper and lower levels and supplementing the bed along the south boundary. Progress would be reviewed to ensure all was satisfactory.
- FC026 To consider the proposal received to investigate the purchase of the building used for Cuckfield Pharmacy**  
The proposer of this item had contacted the Council to withdraw this proposal, so no further discussion took place.
- FC027 Confidential Business: To consider whether to resolve to exclude the press, broadcast media and public (pursuant to the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960) during consideration of the following confidential business to be conducted.**
- a. Chapel Lease  
Council considered the lease and would request an increase to the annual rent in line with inflation. The Clerk would request a date for the annual inspection from J&R Matthews and attend with Cllrs Symonds and Dormer.
  - b. Staff Matters  
Council considered the report and resolved to accept all recommendations. The Clerk was instructed to implement these with immediate effect.

**FC028 To note items arising after the preparation of this Agenda which the Chairman agrees to take as urgent. Such matters will be for noting only or deferral to a future meeting only**

Cllr Oversby-Powell raised the matter of UK Bride, the organisation who had offered a 3 month free trial of their wedding services to the Parish Council, and then refused to accept the cancellation of this contract as the deadline had been missed by 3 days. It had become clear that there were hundreds of other small businesses who had been caught out by this organisation, and these were collaborating to raise funds to fight UK Bride in the local courts. Cllr Oversby-Powell was proposing the Parish Council contributed towards the fund raising. The Clerk would investigate contributing £100 towards the legal fund under delegated powers of authority.

Meeting closed at 9.45pm

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

**Future Meeting:** 13<sup>th</sup> June 2024